



# Deciding to Proceed

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**Steps involved in thinking  
about village character**



# 1<sup>st</sup> Public Meeting April 1999

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- Parish Council had decided it was in favour of a VDS in principle – but only as a village wide initiative
- Chair of Parish Council called a public meeting publicised by posters around the village, letters to established groups etc.
- Meeting format: included presentation from those who had attended training (Ahem members), time for discussion and identification of those to be involved further.



# Concerns Expressed about the VDS approach

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- Assumes acceptance that there will be development – we don't want any more
- Can only make guidelines within the existing planning framework
- Could lead to more development by highlighting the attractiveness of the village
- Could be hijacked by those seeking to promote particular interests – either conservation or development
- Insists on a village consensus which might limit individuals' ability to fight on the basis of what is important to them.



# Attractions of the Process

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- Gives voice to local sense of place
- Allows this to be incorporated within the official planning process
- Will give us more say in future developments
- Major way of influencing quality of design which is normally outside the planning process



# 1<sup>st</sup> Design Team Meeting

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- Individuals volunteered from the first public meeting
- When they met they were faced with decisions about:
  - *Keeping a balance between the 'big picture' and detailed work*
  - *Keeping the wider village involved*
  - *Raising money and sticking to a project plan*



# Overview of Sense of Place

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- Conveying a broad picture is important to convey a sense of place
- Exercises to help people reflect on it:
  - What are the landmarks?
  - What would you show a friend?
  - How do things change at different times of the year?
  - Where do different groups congregate?
  - Are there boundaries between parts of the village?



# But also need for more detailed, specialised, work

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- Identifying the small things that people find important and valuable
- Researching the history of settlement patterns, roads, footpaths, buildings
- Identifying different architectural styles and features
- Understanding the planning context and what is acceptable as a VDS guideline
- These may involve outside and / or professional expertise and detailed discussion



# Keeping the Village Involved

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- VDS must express the views of the whole community but in practice will be carried forward by a fairly small group
- Need to provide multiple opportunities for engagement and comment between detailed stages of work carried out by the VDS team





# Appleby's Approach to Consultation

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- 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Meeting with outside speakers
- Village Character workshop
- Village Design Statement Public Meeting followed by circulation of draft to village
- Final Public Meeting
- External consultation & launch
- All meetings publicised via posters, mailing lists, door to door leafleting etc.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Meeting June 1999

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- Intention to increase village awareness of process and encourage wide participation in Village Character Workshop
- Involved external participants from District Council Planning Dept and Rural Community Council (earlier meeting just village speakers). Also experience of other villages
- Report on progress to date of village team



# Village Character Workshop

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- 2 stage event – Saturday morning and following Monday evening
- Stage 1. Learn about objectives and approach. Divide into topic areas. Time to plan activities with guidance from existing design team.
- Village walks of around 2 hours by each team – taking map to record important features, notebook to explain why important & what photographed, photographer
- Re-group to hand in films and have lunch – importance of making event social and fun!

# A look at the Past will Shape Village's Future

(Local Newspaper Headline)





# Village Character Workshop (contd)

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- Stage 2: (photos processed in between)
- Teams have 1 hour to arrange material as a display and prepare a short presentation which summarises points
- 5 minute presentations by 4 groups: buildings & design; landscapes & settings; historical influences; roads, paths & transport
- General discussion and opportunity to view each others' displays



# Village Design Statement Open Meeting August 1999

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- Advertised widely as a display and progress report
- Included displays of photographs and other work of the groups; presentation of first draft of the VDS, discussion / feedback
- Draft the circulated to the whole village with encouragement to comment.



# Final Public Meeting January 2000

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- Design team had continued meeting to refine drafts taking account of comments received etc, to choose photographs, decide on overall design of document
- Meeting to present 'final' version
- Also District Council representatives to discuss next stage – consideration of adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance



# Funding the Project

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- Need for funds for printing, copying, photos, etc. Most expensively printing the final document.
- Total costs around £3,000 (in 2000)
- Raised from grants, donations, awards, and fundraising activities including a raffle (with donated prizes) and a photo competition (with an entrance fee).



# Winning Support for the Project





# Time involved

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- Initial discussions took several months
- From first public meeting to publishing the document took around a year
- Design team meeting every couple of weeks and individuals working hard in between
- Main public involvement in discussion, data gathering and comment took around 3 months

# England-the wider picture

- 10373 parishes
- 8800 parish councils
- Started in 50% of local authorities
- Average period 17 months

